

PRESS RELEASE

Kentucky Division of Emergency Management

Winter Storm Carbon Monoxide Safety Message

For Immediate Release

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FRANKFORT, KY: December 20, 2009 – Kentucky Division of Emergency Management (KYEM) and health officials urge caution while using gas-powered appliances and generators during power outages. These devices emit carbon monoxide which is a silent and deadly killer.

Carbon monoxide is an invisible, odorless, tasteless gas and is highly poisonous. Depending on the level of exposure, carbon monoxide may cause:

- Fatigue
- Weakness
- Chest pains for those with heart disease
- Shortness of breath upon exertion
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Headaches
- Confusion
- Lack of coordination
- Impaired vision
- Loss of consciousness
- In severe cases, death

KYEM recommends the following precautions to help prevent carbon monoxide poisoning:

- Do not burn charcoal or gas grills inside a house, garage, vehicle, tent or fireplace.
- Never use a generator indoors, including in homes, garages, basements, crawl spaces and other enclosed or partially enclosed areas, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent carbon monoxide build-up in the home.
- Always locate the unit outdoors on a dry surface, away from doors, windows, vents and air-conditioning equipment that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- Follow the instructions that come with your generator. Position the unit outdoors and away from doors, windows, vents and air conditioning equipment that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors.
- Have your home heating systems (including chimneys and flues) inspected each year for proper operations and leakage.
- Install battery-operated carbon monoxide detectors or plug-in carbon monoxide detectors with battery back-up in your home, according to the

manufacturer's installation instructions. The carbon monoxide detectors should conform to the latest safety standards for carbon monoxide detectors (UL 2034, IAS 6-96, or CSA 6.19.01).

- Test your carbon monoxide detectors frequently and replace dead batteries.
- If your carbon monoxide detector indicates high levels of carbon monoxide, leave the building immediately and call 911.
- Remember that you cannot see or smell carbon monoxide and portable generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly.
- If you start to feel sick, dizzy, or weak while using a generator, get to fresh air right away. Do not delay. If someone has collapsed or is not breathing, call 911 immediately.

Additional information and winter safety tips can be found on the KYEM web site at www.kyem.ky.gov.

Additional information regarding carbon monoxide poisoning can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/co/guidelines.htm> and <http://chfs.ky.gov/news/prevention+carbon+monoxide+poisoning-dph.htm>.

KYEM officials encourage everyone to remain alert and continue to monitor their local broadcasting stations and weather alert radios. If you do not have to travel, stay in. If you must travel, use caution and drive slow, maintaining extra stopping distance.

Road conditions throughout the state can be found on the Kentucky Department of Transportation's Web site at www.511.ky.gov, or by calling 511 in Kentucky or 1-866-737-3767 for out-of-state callers.

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